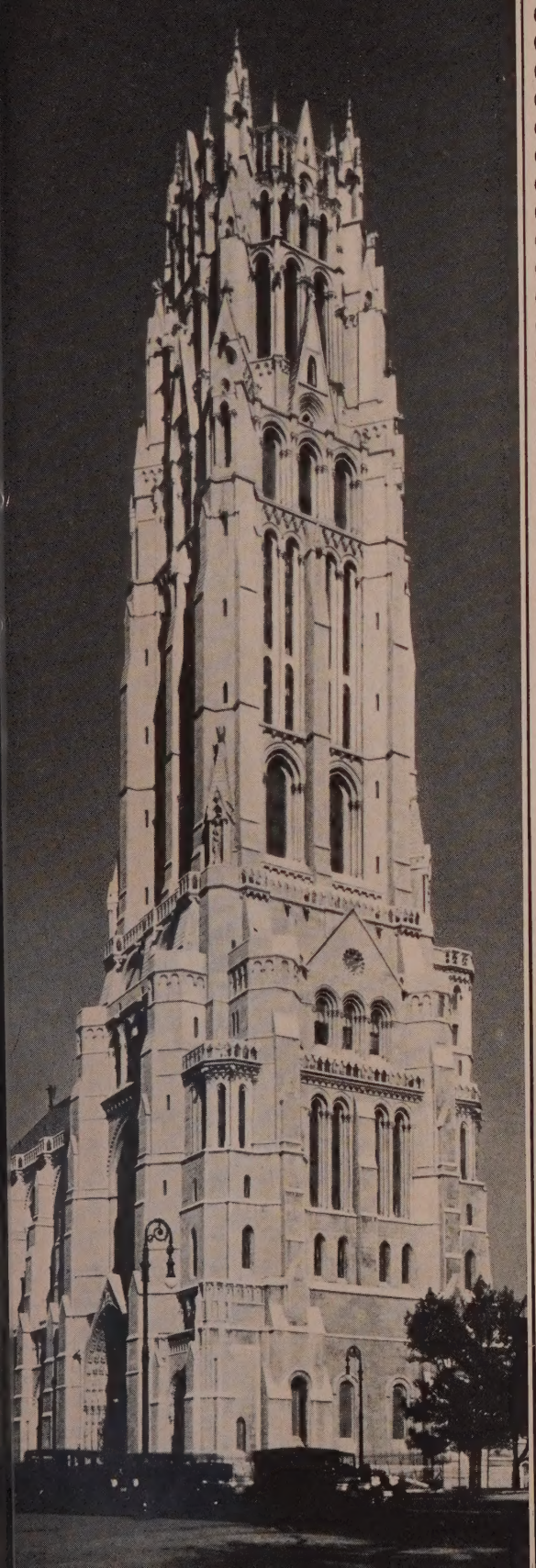

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The Church Must Go Beyond Modernism

The Carillon at Mercersburg Academy

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SOCRATES' PRISON

The Church Must Go Beyond Modernism

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

If we are successfully to maintain the thesis that the church must go beyond modernism, we must start by seeing that the church had to go as far as modernism. Fifty years ago a boy, seven years of age, was crying himself to sleep at night in terror lest, dying, he should go to hell, and his solicitous mother, out of all patience with the fearful teachings which brought such apparitions to the mind, was trying in vain to comfort him. That boy is preaching to you today and you may be sure that to him the achievements of Christian modernism in the last half century seem not only important but indispensable.

Fifty years ago the intellectual portion of Western civilization had turned one of the most significant mental corners in history and was looking out on a new view of the world. The church, however, was utterly unfitted for the appreciation of that view. Protestant Christianity had been officially formulated in pre-scientific days. The Augsburg Confession was a notable statement but the men who drew it up, including Luther himself, did not even believe that the earth goes round the sun. The Westminster Confession, for the rigorous acceptance of which the Presbyterian rear-guard still contends, was a memorable document but it was written forty years before Newton published his work on the law of gravitation. Moreover, not only were the mental patterns of Protestant Christianity officially formulated in pre-scientific days but, as is always true of religion, those patterns seemed sacred to their believers and the changes forced by the new science seemed impious and sacrilegious.

Youths, like myself, therefore, a half century ago, faced an appalling lag between our generation's intellect on one side and its religion on the other, with religion asking us to believe incredible things. Behind his playfulness the author of Through the Looking Glass had this serious matter in mind when he represented the White Queen as saying to Alice, "I'm just one hundred and one, five months and a day." Said Alice, "I can't believe *that*!" Said the Queen pityingly, "Can't you? Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes." So the church seemed to be speaking to us.

Modernism, therefore, came as a desperately needed way of thinking. It insisted that the deep and vital experiences of the Christian soul, with itself, with its fellows, with its God, could be carried over into this new world and understood in the light of the new knowledge. We refused to live bifurcated lives, our intellect in the late nineteenth and our religion in the early sixteenth century. God, we said, is a living God who has never uttered his final word on any subject; why, therefore, should pre-scientific frameworks of thought be so sacred that forever through them man must seek the

Eternal and the Eternal seek man? So we said, and, thanks to modernism, it became true of many an anxious and troubled soul in our time that

> He saw the boundless scheme dilate,
> In star and blossom, sky and clod;
> And as the universe grew great,
> He dreamed for it a greater God.

The church thus had to go as far as modernism but now the church must go beyond it. For even this brief rehearsal of its history reveals modernism's essential nature; it is primarily an adaptation, an adjustment, an accommodation of Christian faith to contemporary scientific thinking. It started by taking the intellectual culture of a particular period as its criterion and then adjusted Christian teaching to that standard. Herein lies modernism's shallowness and transiency; it arose out of a temporary intellectual crisis; it took a special type of scientific thinking as standard; it became an adaptation to, a harmonization with, the intellectual culture of a particular generation. That, however, is no adequate religion to represent the Eternal and claim the allegiance of the soul. Let it be a modernist who says that to you! Unless the church can go deeper and reach higher than that it will fail indeed.

In the first place, modernism has been excessively preoccupied with intellectualism. Its chosen problem has been somehow to adjust Christian faith to the modern intellect so that a man could be a Christian without throwing his mind away. Modernism's message to the church has been after this fashion: When, long ago, the new music came, far from clinging to old sackbuts and psalteries, you welcomed Palestrina, Bach, Beethoven, and their successors to the glory of God; when the new art came you did not refuse it but welcomed Cimabue, Giotto, Raphael, and Michelangelo to the enrichment of your faith; when the new architecture came, far from clinging to primitive catacombs or old Romanesque, you greeted the Gothic with its expanded spaces and aspiring altitudes; so now, when the new science comes, take that in too, and, however painful the adaptations, adjust your faith to it and assimilate its truths into your Christian thinking.

Surely, that has been a necessary appeal but it centers attention on one problem only—intellectual adjustment to modern science. It approaches the vast field of man's experience and need headfirst, whereas the deepest experiences of man's soul, whether in religion or out of it, cannot be approached headfirst. Friendship, the love that makes a home, the enjoyment of music, delight in nature, devotion to moral causes, the practise of the presence of God,—name as you will the list of the soul's deepest experiences and needs, and while, if we are wise, we use our heads on them, we do not approach them mainly head first but heart first, conscience first, imagination first. A man is vastly greater than his logic, and the sweep and ambit of his spiritual experience and need are incalculably wider than his rational processes. So modernism, as such, covers only a segment of the spiritual field and does not nearly compass the range of religion's meaning.

Indeed, the critical need of overpassing modernism is evident in the fact that our personal spiritual problems do not lie there any more. When I was a student in the seminary, the classrooms where the atmosphere grew tense with excitement concerned the higher criticism of the Bible and the harmonization of science and religion. That, however,

is no longer the case. The classrooms in the seminary where the atmosphere grows tense today concern Christian ethics and the towering question whether Christ has a moral challenge that can shake this contemporary culture to its foundations and save us from our deadly personal and social sins. So the world has moved far to a place where mere Christian harmonizers, absorbed with the intellectual attempt to adapt faith to science and accommodate Christ to prevalent culture, seem trivial and obsolete. Our modern world, as a whole, cries out not so much for souls intellectually adjusted to it as for souls morally maladjusted to it, not most of all for accommodators and adjusters but for intellectual and ethical challengers.

When Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians he said that he had become a Jew to the Jews that he might win the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks that he might win the Greeks. "I am become," he said, "all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." That is a modernistic passage of adjustment and accommodation. But that is not all Paul said. Had it been all, Paul would have sunk from sight in an indistinguishable blend with the Greco-Roman culture of his day and we should never have heard of him. When he wrote the second time to the Corinthians he said something else:

> Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,
> And touch no unclean thing.

Church of Christ, take that to yourself now! Stop this endeavor to harmonize yourself with modern culture as though *that* were a standard and criterion. Rather, come out from among them. Only an independent standing-ground from which to challenge modern culture can save either it or you.

In the second place, not only has modernism been thus predominantly intellectualistic and therefore partial, but, strange to say, at the same time it has been dangerously sentimental. The reason for this is easy to explain. One of the predominant elements in the intellectual culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to which modernism adjusted itself, was illusory belief in inevitable progress. So many hopeful and promising things were afoot that two whole generations were fairly bewitched into thinking that every day in every way man was growing better and better. Scientific discovery, exploration and invention, the rising tide of economic welfare, the spread of democracy, the increase of humanitarianism, the doctrine of evolution itself, twisted to mean that automatically today has to be better than yesterday and tomorrow better than today—how many elements seduced us in those romantic days into thinking that all was right with the world!

In the intellectual culture to which modernistic Christianity adapted itself, such lush optimism was a powerful factor, and the consequences are everywhere present in the natural predispositions of our thought today. In the little village of Selbourne, England, the visitor is shown a row of lovely trees planted by a minister so that from his parsonage windows he need not look upon the village slaughter-house. Those trees are suggestive and symbolic of the sentimental illusions we plant to hide from our eyes the ugly facts of life. Especially we modernistic Christians, dealing as we were with thoughts of a kindly God by evolution lifting everything and everybody up, were deeply tempted to live in a fool's paradise behind our lovely trees!

For example, modernistic Christianity largely eliminated from its faith the God of moral judgment. To be sure, in the old theology, the God of moral judgment had been terribly presented so that little children did cry themselves to sleep at night for fear of him and of his hell. Modernism, however, not content with eliminating the excrescences of a harsh theology, became softer yet and created the general impression that there is nothing here to fear at all. One of the most characteristic religious movements of the nineteenth century heralded this summary of faith:

> The Fatherhood of God.
> The Brotherhood of Man.
> The Leadership of Jesus.
> Salvation by Character.
> The Progress of Mankind—
> onward and upward forever.

Well, if that is the whole creed, this is a lovely world with nothing here to dread at all.

But there are things here to dread. Ask the physicians. They will tell us that in a law-abiding world are stern conditions whose fulfilment or nonfulfilment involve bodily destiny. Ask the novelists and dramatists, and at their best they are not lying to us as they reveal the inexorable fatality with which character and conduct work out their implied consequence. Ask the economists. They will tell us there are things to dread which lead to an inevitable economic hell. Ask even the historians and they will talk at times like old preachers about the God of moral judgment as James Anthony Froude did when he said, "One lesson, and only one, history may be said to repeat with distinctness: that the world is built somehow on moral foundations; that, in the long run, it is well with the good; in the long run, it is ill with the wicked."

Indeed, cannot we use our own eyes to see that there are things here to fear? For this is no longer the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is the epoch after the first world war has shaken the earth to its foundations and the God of judgment has spoken. My soul, what a world, which the gentle modernism of my younger ministry, with its kindly sentiments and lush optimism, does not fit at all! We must go beyond that. Because I know that I am speaking here to many minds powerfully affected by modernism, I say to you as to myself: Come out of these intellectual cubicles and sentimental retreats which we built by adapting Christian faith to an optimistic era. Underline this: *Sin is real.* Personal and social sin is as terribly real as our forefathers said it was, no matter how we change their way of saying it. And it leads men and nations to damnation as they said it did, no matter how we change their way of picturing it. For these are times, real times, of the kind out of which man's great exploits have commonly been won, in which, if a man is to have a real faith he must gain it from the very teeth of dismay; if he is to have real hope, it must shine, like a Rembrandt portrait, from the dark background of fearful apprehension; if he is to have real character, he must achieve it against the terrific down-drag of an antagonistic world; and if he is to have a real church, it must be not harmonized with the world but standing out from the world and challenging it.

In the third place, modernism has even watered down and thinned out the central message and distinctive truth of religion, the reality of God. One does

not mean by that, of course, that modernists have been atheists. One does mean, however, that the intellectual culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to which modernism adjusted itself, was predominantly man-centered. Man was blowing on his hands and doing such things at such a rate as never had been done or dreamed on earth before. Man was pioneering new truth and building a new social order. You young people who were not here then hardly can imagine with what cheerful and confident trust we confided to man the saving of the world. So the temptation was to relegate God to an advisory capacity, a kind of chairman of the board of sponsors of our highly successful human enterprise. A poet like Swinburne could even put the prevailing mood into candid words:

> Thou art smitten, thou God, thou art smitten; thy death is upon thee, O Lord.
> And the love-song of earth as thou diest resounds through the wind of her wings—
> Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things.

Look out on the world today and try, if you can, to repeat those words of Swinburne and still keep your face straight! At any rate, if ever I needed something deeper to go on than Swinburne's sentimental humanism about man as the master of things, it is now—a philosophy, namely, a profound philosophy about what is ultimately and eternally real in this universe. We modernists were so disgusted with the absurdities of the old supernaturalistic theology that we were commonly tempted to visit our distaste on theology as a whole and throw it away. But theology means thinking about the central problem of existence—what is ultimately and eternally real in this universe. And in the lurid light of days like these it becomes clearer, as an increasing number of atheists are honestly saying, that if the eternally real is merely material, if the cosmos is a physical fortuity and the earth an accident, if there is no profounder reason for mankind's being here than just that at one stage in the planet's cooling the heat happened to be right, and if we ourselves are "the disease of the agglutinated dust," then to stand on this temporary and accidental earth in the face of this vast cosmos and try lyrically to sing,

> Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things,

is an absurd piece of sentimental tomfoolery. And because I have been and am a modernist it is proper that I should confess that often the modernistic movement, adjusting itself to a man-centered culture, has encouraged this mood, watered down the thought of the Divine, and, may we be forgiven for this, left souls standing, like the ancient Athenians, before an altar to an Unknown God!

On that point the church must go beyond modernism. We have been all things to all men long enough. We have adapted and adjusted and accommodated and conceded long enough. We have at times gotten so low down that we talked as though the highest compliment that could be paid Almighty God was that a few scientists believed in him. Yet all the time, by right, we had an independent standing-ground and a message of our own in which alone is there hope for humankind. The eternally real is the spiritual. The highest in us comes from the deepest in the universe. Goodness and truth and beauty are not accidents but revelations of creative reality. God is!

On that point come out from among them and be ye separate! As the poet imagined Paul saying:

> Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
> cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny:
> yea with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,
> Stand Thou on that side, for on this am I.

Finally, modernism has too commonly lost its ethical standing-ground and its power of moral attack. It is a dangerous thing for a great religion to begin adjusting itself to the culture of a special generation. Harmonizing slips easily into compromising. To adjust Christian faith to the new astronomy, the new geology, the new biology is absolutely indispensable. But suppose that this modernizing process, well started, goes on and Christianity adapts itself to contemporary nationalism, contemporary imperialism, contemporary capitalism, contemporary racialism,—harmonizing itself, that is, with the prevailing social *status quo* and the common moral judgments of our time —what then has become of religion, so sunk and submerged in undifferentiated identity with this world?

This lamentable end of a modernizing process, starting with indispensable adaptations and slipping into concession and compromise, is a familiar phenomenon in religious history. For the word "modernism" may not be exclusively identified with the adjustment of Christian faith and practise to the culture of a single era. Modernization is a recurrent habit in every living religion. Early Protestantism, itself, emerging along with the new nationalism and the new capitalism, was in its day modernism, involving itself and us in entanglements and compliances with political and economic ideas in whose presence we still are tempted to be servile. Every era with powerful originative factors in it evokes from religion indispensable adaptations, followed by further concessive acquiescences, which in time must be superseded and outgrown. Early Christianity went out from an old Jewish setting into a new Greek culture and never would have survived if it had not carried up into its faith the profound insights of Greek philosophy. So in the classic creeds, like that of Nicæa, we have a blending of the old faith with the new philosophy, and in that process John and Paul themselves had already played a part. But, alas, early Christianity in its adjustment of its faith to Greek culture did not stop with adaptation to the insights of philosophy. At last it adapted itself to Constantine, to the imperial court, to war, to the lucrative enjoyment of imperial favors, to the use of bloody persecutions to coerce belief. One after another, it threw away the holiest things that had been entrusted to it by its Lord until, often hardly distinguishable from the culture it lived in, it nearly modernized itself into moral futility. Lift up that history, as it were a mirror, in which to see the peril of our American churches.

It is not in Germany alone that the church stands in danger of being enslaved by society. There the enslavement is outward, deliberate, explicit, organized. Here it is secret, quiet, pervasive, insidious. A powerful culture—social, economic, nationalistic, militaristic—impinging from every side upon the church, cries with persuasive voices, backed by all the sanctions and motives most urgent to the self-interest of man, Adjust yourself, adapt yourself, accommodate yourself!

When Great Britain was as mad about the Boer War as Italy is mad today about the Ethiopian War and all the

(*Continued on page 55*)

Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

Eternal Spirit, high above yet deep within us all, we worship Thee. Thanks be to Thee for all interior resources of power by which the spirit, even in the midst of this tumultuous world, can nobly live. Thanks to Thee for the inward shepherding which can lead us in green pastures and beside still waters, restoring the soul.

For the privilege of the shut door, the quiet hour of tranquillity, and the peace gained in high companionship with Thee, for all that the spirit can do with its own solitariness, thanks be to Thee. In Thy sanctuary today, even more deeply, we thank Thee for fellowship. With gratitude we lift in Thy presence the remembrance of our friends. In our imaginations again we see their faces, in our minds we think their names. For their comfort in the day of trouble, stability in the time of confusion, guidance when we were bewildered, inspiration when we were downcast, gracing our lives with beauty and crowning them with joy, thanks be to Thee.

Thanks be to Thee for that wider circle of friends from all generations whom we have not seen in the flesh but have met in the spirit. For the interior fellowship of great souls through whom Thou hast blessed the world,—prophets, apostles, martyrs, creators of beauty, discoverers of truth,—who as soon as we are born begin to be our friends and with whom we can walk in an ennobling fellowship, thanks be to Thee.

Thanks be to Thee for the fellowship of our homes. Thou seest how deeply our care for them lies in our hearts and how dear are the faces that our imaginations picture and our spirits love. O God, be merciful as we pray for our families, for the love that sustains them, for the children that go forth from them, and for all the ties of affection and memory and hope that make them beautiful.

Thanks be to Thee for the fellowship of the church. Imperfect people, we build imperfect churches, yet our gratitude ascends to Thee for the ministry of Thy church, which has brought to us so rich a heritage and inspirations that have elevated our common lives to altitudes else impossible. For the great tradition of Thy gospel and the corporate testimony of Thy saints we thank Thee.

We beseech Thee for fellowships sadly broken in the earth. Forgive us for sundered nations and divided races and embittered classes. Thou great Friend of man, Whose dearest wish is the friendship of Thy people, beget in us so true a spirit of goodwill that we may build at last, though it be through sacrifice, a friendly world.

We lift in our petition those who can be helped by no earthly friendship only. So curiously hast Thou made us that the soul, though set among many human helpers, is still a lonely traveler on this planet. Temptations are here that must be faced alone and troubles that must be borne alone. For all problems that Thy people face in the solitude of their souls we pray to Thee. Thou great friend of all the sons of men, let not Thy friendship fail us. When most we seem to be alone, people the solitude with the presence of the Unseen Companion, the invisible Friend of our pilgrimage, and make us strong in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

The Carillon of Mercersburg Academy

By Kamiel Lefévere

. . . No massive chord was lost, no faery note,
As that mysterious moonlit melody
Above the drowsy meadows seemed to float,
With jeweled radiance glowed the panes on high,
While "something heavenly" echoed down the sky. . . .

John Russell Hayes

Many schools and colleges have realized that music is the delight of youth, the consolation of time, and so are showing an interest in having the voice of the bells singing its message of hope and peace over their campus, giving an accent of Christian community life and good fellowship.

The Chapel and Singing Tower of the Mercersburg Academy in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, is built on a hill, the highest part of the Academy grounds, lifting its slender spire into the heavens, overlooking a landscape complete in natural beauty, with the Blue Mountains to the east, the Tuscaroras to the west and the impressive Cumberland Valley rolling between, presenting one of the most perfect settings to bring out the characteristic qualities and charm of the carillon music to full perfection.

Plans for its construction were finished in 1917, to be stopped, however, when America entered the World War, and to be resumed in 1922. The first cornerstone was laid by Mrs. Calvin Coolidge in June, 1924, and the dedication occurred in October, 1926.

Built in Gothic style, the whole structure develops in a sense from the middle period of mediæval art, when the austerity of the XIIIth century was moving toward the greater richness of the XIVth and XVth centuries. Although a building of this generation, every effort has been made to preserve, through its modernism, the unbroken sequence of architectural tradition and spiritual energy, which traces back through the Christian religion and without a break to the great era of Mediævalism.

The tower, with its stone spire, is a replica of the spire of St. Mary the Virgin at Oxford. The carillon consists of 43 bells, ranging from a Bourdon Bell, weighing 7,826 pounds, to a small bell of 12 pounds, their total weight being 38,217 pounds. This carillon was cast by Gillett & Johnston, of Croydon, England, and is the gift of Henry Bucher Swope and his family, after whom the five largest bells have been named. The next fifteen larger bells bear symbolic inscriptions, mainly of a religious character.

The casting of this carillon differs from many other carillons, as a matter of pure sentiment, through the fact that two hundred twenty-three pieces of copper were moulded into the largest bell. All of these pieces were of a more or less historic interest and were gathered from all parts of the globe. Some of the most important were ancient copper coins, minted before the birth of Jesus Christ, such as one of Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Athens with a figure of Athena, ancient Rome showing a wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, ancient Bactria, which is now Persia, Antioch in the time of Augustus Cæsar, Carthage in the period when she

CHAPEL,
MERCERSBURG ACADEMY

was fighting Rome, Egypt in the days of Ptolemy III, and Nero.

There were also three coins from the early Christian era, including a coin of Constantine the Great, which was struck "to the genius of the Roman people," a coin of Diocletian, a Roman cup-shaped coin from the reign of Gallienus, a Roman emperor who lived two hundred and fifty years after Christ, and who was killed by his own soldiers.

There is also a copper ring from the Swiss lake dwellings. This form of money is very rare and goes back more than one thousand years before Christ, when the early peoples of Switzerland built their houses on piles in the lakes.

Coins from many distant countries are minted into the bell, such as Siberia, in the reign of Catherine II, Morocco, German East Africa, Bengal, Sumatra, British Guiana, Sarawak, the Boer Dutch Republic, Australia, French Guiana, New Zealand, Madagascar, Portuguese West Africa, Prince of Wales Islands, plus many pieces of copper of a very varied and real historic value.

Bryan Barker, of Loughborough, England, has been the carillonneur since 1928, sending the melody of the bells down the valley and over the mountains into the wide world, in a Tennyson spirit of

"Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK URGES EXTENSION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY MOVEMENT

Conference at Princeton Adopts Recommendation for More Effective Coöperation

Princeton, N. J., Dec. 13—A plea for the extension of the movement for Christian unity was made by the Most Rev. William Temple, D.D., Archbishop of York, at a conference of 34 representatives of five ecumenical organizations which have a world-wide membership, held here today.

"Our unity is founded on the unity of God," the Archbishop said. "We must extend the things we do together and promote a vastly greater number of conferences whereby we increase understanding of one another's aims and traditions."

Dr. Temple, who is associated in an official way with all five movements, advocated a general council in which each should be represented and through which they could coöperate and promote unity of effort and ultimately simplicity and unification of program and organization.

In response to the Archbishop's plea, the conference unanimously agreed upon a recommendation urging more effective coöperation, which will be sent to the organizations interested. The recommendation reads as follows:

"The question of closer relations between the various ecumenical Christian organizations will doubtless be considered at the world conventions to be held in 1937 and 1938 at Oxford, Edinburgh and Kowloon.

"In the meantime, to facilitate preparations for 1937 and 1938 and to regularize the informal consultative group already existing, we recommend that suitable action be taken by the responsible committees of these organizations, at their earliest meetings, to make the existing coöperation more effective and to consider steps toward extending the measure of that cooperation.

"We note with satisfaction that a beginning has been made in this country by the appointment of an American consultative committee of The World Conference on Faith and Order, the Universal Christian Council and the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches and we recommend the enlargement of this committee by the appointment of members from the other organizations not included in this consultative group."

A discussion took place of all aspects of the coöperative work of the churches in these world-wide Christian movements. Among those taking part in the discussion were: Dr. John R. Mott, Dean Henry P. Van Dusen, Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, Dr. William P. Merrill, Dr. Henry A. Atkinson, Dr. Lewis S. Mudge, Dr. W. H. Greever, Dr. August Steimle, Prof. William Adams Brown and Bishop T. Albert Moore.

The groups represented at the conference were The World Conference on Faith and Order, the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, the World Christian Student Federation, the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches and the International Missionary Council. Three of these organizations are scheduled to hold international meetings within the next three years. The World Conference on Faith and Order at Edinburgh in 1937, the Universal Christian Council at Oxford in 1937 and the International Missionary Council at Kowloon, China, in 1938.

The Latchstring

CONCERNING TOYOHIKO KAGAWA

By Dr. Henry Smith Leiper
Literary Editor, N.C.J.C. News Service

I was in Kobe, Japan, in 1919 when a most peculiar thing happened. A young Japanese minister had been arrested for his protests against the cornering of the rice market and the forcing up of the cost of living by a few speculators. The city magistrates were soon presented with a petition signed in their own blood by four thousand people demanding the release of the minister. And he was released.

It is not hard to see why I became interested in that minister. I found that he was the son of a former secretary of the Imperial Council of State and a dancing girl; that he had studied in Princeton and could have had high position, but that he was giving himself to the cause of the very poor in the slums.

Poems of the Slums

From that early period of his work comes one of the books I recommend. It is a book of poems dealing with the life of the slums. Dr. Sherwood Eddy has written the introduction to these poems and they are illustrated with pen sketches. Through them one comes into a measure of understanding of why Toyohiko Kagawa, their author, is one of the great Christians of the modern world, and why, in spite of his strongly-worded disapproval of the policy of his country in China, he is too much loved and revered to be silenced by the militarists. They are short poems, some of them very short, but they afford a simple, yet startlingly realistic, picture of the human conditions which have so stirred the soul of their author. Most of them were written not in the study, but in the streets and teeming alleys of the fetid slums. Without being sentimental they are deeply moving and reveal not only the inner tragedy of many submerged lives in modern Japan but likewise the shining soul of their friend and advocate. (Songs from the Slums. Cokesbury Press, Nashville. $1.00.)

Meaning of Christianity

The prose work by the same author is representative of his mature thought. Although a novelist of such distinction in his own country that his works are among the best sellers of modern times, he is likewise, and primarily, a preacher of persuasive power and great spiritual vitality. He discusses from the viewpoint of one who has carried a very heavy cross—early social ostracism, banishment from home, prison and oppression from the government, and crushing ill health—the meaning of that central Christian doctrine which teaches that the God who made man has himself suffered in order to win back his creatures when they use their powers of free will to choose the wrong road. (Meditations on the Cross. Willett, Clark & Co., Chicago. $1.50.)

The chapter headings give a pretty clear idea of what the book deals with. They include: the Cross in the Consciousness of Jesus, the Cross, the Ministry of Jesus, the Cross and the 4th Gospel, the Cross as revealed in Paul's parables, the Cross and prayer, the fine art of death, those who take up

the Cross, divine love made real through the Cross, the loving God in society, the Cross in social life, daily life, and social movements.

Searching Discussion

It is not the sort of book which will be appreciated by the reader who is expecting the Western type of thought. Kagawa is an Oriental. As such it is more than possible that he understands better than the average Western interpreter the mind and heart of Jesus of Nazareth. This is a searching and penetrating discussion born out of experience and thoroughly realistic. There is nothing of the armchair philosopher or academic lecturer about the flaming Japanese prophet of the Christian way in the modern world. He is so much interested in the problem of the submerged poor that he is developing throughout Japan the consumers' cooperative movement. Certain advertising journals in this country are so afraid of his influence that on the announcement of his present visit in the United States during December to July they carried editorials warning old-line business against this "dangerous radical" who believes in business for service and has succeeded in winning a growing following in the East.

The fact that he has engaged for years in a grim battle against communism and that he sees in coöperative movements of the sort already well established in Denmark and England a means of righting social injustice and preventing communist revolution, is nothing to these journals. But it is a commentary on the significance of the man who has in these two books opened windows in his soul through which American readers can come better to know him and the religion of which he is so distinguished a representative.

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Mr. Leiper's reference to the grim battle which Mr. Kagawa has waged against communism in Japan recalls the hitherto unpublished story of an attempt by Japanese communists to break up a meeting which Mr. Kagawa was addressing in The Riverside Church on the occasion of his former visit to this country. On that trip as on the present one his itinerary in America began on the West Coast where he had a clash with communism in California. That experience made Mr. Kagawa a marked man in so far as the police were concerned because in the process of protecting him some communists were arrested and were jailed for their part in the hostile demonstrations. The Japanese Christian people in New York asked The Riverside Church for a meeting place to which all Japanese Christians and others interested could be invited to hear Mr. Kagawa. The meeting was held in the nave of our church and to our great surprise the police, though uninvited and unadvised either by us or by the sponsors of the meeting, appeared in force to see that no harm came to the visiting speaker. It would appear from the eventualities that ensued that the police were acting upon advice and instructions emanating from California and based on the prior experience. In any case there they were, a squad of twenty or more, and sure enough their anticipations were most dramatically realized. Mr. Kagawa had hardly gotten started when loud and challenging voices were raised in the audience with first a man in one section standing up to voice his disapproval and then another rising in another section of the audience bent on continuing

the argument and prolonging the interruption. But immediately the police moved into the nave and it was a strange sight indeed to see the husky officers, hats on and night sticks in their hands, ranging up and down the aisles, insisting upon quiet and forcing the remonstrants down into the seats, with frequent threats of ejection and worse.

To all this Mr. Kagawa presented an attitude that was well calculated to meet the situation effectively. He was unperturbed, smiling, gracious, assured. With folded arms he stood in silence before his tormentors, refusing to compete with them or to upbraid them. After fully twenty minutes of this he made it known that it was his wish that the officers retire. They retired at least to the vestibule where they awaited further eventualities and where they made evident their regret at having to invade a House of Worship on the one hand and not having finished the job of subduing the communists on the other. But Mr. Kagawa was equal to the emergency. His patience and fairness under fire finally triumphed and he was able to go on to what his Japanese Christian audience testified was a powerful and moving evangelistic appeal.

We are happy to welcome this great friend of the Japanese people back to America and to New York and to join our prayers to those of his hosts of followers in Japan and over the world for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

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SERMON

(*Continued from page 48*)

forces of propaganda had whipped up the frenzy of the people to a fever heat, John Morley one night in Manchester faced an indignant, antagonistic crowd, and pleaded with his countrymen against the war. This in part is what he said:

> "You may carry fire and sword into the midst of peace and industry: it will be wrong. A war of the strongest government in the world . . . against this little republic will bring you no glory: it will be wrong. You may make thousands of women widows and thousands of children fatherless: it will be wrong. It may add a new province to your empire: *it will still be wrong.*'"

John Morley did not call himself a Christian. He called himself an agnostic. But he was far nearer standing where Christ intended his church to stand than the church has often been.

We modernists had better talk to ourselves like this. So had the fundamentalists—but that is not our affair. We have already largely won the battle we started out to win; we have adjusted the Christian faith to the best intelligence of our day and have won the strongest minds and the best abilities of the churches to our side. Fundamentalism is still with us but mostly in the backwaters. The future of the churches, if we will have it so, is in the hands of modernism. Therefore let all modernists lift a new battle cry: We must go beyond modernism! And in that new enterprise the watchword will be not, Accommodate yourself to the prevailing culture! but, Stand out from it and challenge it! For this unescapable fact, which again and again in Christian history has called modernism to its senses, we face: we cannot harmonize Christ himself with modern culture. What Christ does to modern culture is to challenge it.

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on October 3, 1935.

An Usher Repents

He Will Whisper No More in Church

Not a word of excuse can I offer by way of vindication. Sheer, stark, unmitigated guilt is the only proper verdict in my case. I have just finished reading the contribution "I Appeal" in the October issue of The Church Monthly, reading it for the third time in fact. Some irresistible power born of self-condemnation impels me to read it over and over, as an evil-doer is driven against his will to the scene of his crime. The thrust of merited reproof deftly delivered in that article by "A Supplicant for Silence" smites me with full force. Every jot and tittle of that gently yet firmly phrased charge is as though directly aimed at me. And justly so, for none has offended more grievously than I, and my head is bowed with a heavy burden of shame.

Despite his sympathetic tone and manner, "A Supplicant for Silence" has all the relentless drive of a public prosecutor when he tells my fellow church members, all the while meaning me: "I don't believe that they—with their good intentions and fine sense of courtesy—half understand what they are doing when they whisper and talk so persistently and insistently during the period just preceding the morning service on Sunday."

Quite right. They don't, or rather *I* don't, or didn't at least. To have whispered in church is bad enough, but to have whispered persistently and insistently and, as though that were not sufficiently damning, to have been oblivious of the import of my misconduct—that is what hurts. "I regret to say that it is the women who are the chief offenders," writes our appellant contributor. Well, here is *one* chief offender who is not a woman and therefore cannot crave the indulgence thus gallantly accorded the distaff side. So *that* defence collapses. Worse still, I am an usher, which buries me hopelessly beneath the wreckage of extenuating circumstances.

Yes, let me make a clean breast of it. I am one of that charmed circle of hand-picked paragons that supposedly should serve as patterns of deportment for the assembled parishioners, unless *noblesse oblige* has reached the chronic moulting stage. Yet have I fallen, fallen ingloriously from my high estate. For I have stood there in the wing-collared dignity of my official rank, arrayed in the full panoply of striped pantaloons and stately black cutaway and snow-white carnation, stood there again and again of a Sunday morning during the period just preceding the service, and have so far forgotten myself as to whisper and talk persistently and insistently, generally with a fellow-usher, though sometimes with my fellow church members. And in the latter case it was not always women, either, with whom I held brief low-voiced colloquies and frequent whispered discoursings. Let me be candid about it, it was not always women.

Moreover, let me frankly reaffirm that the thought of my unseemly behavior rankles intolerably and bids fair to abide with me indefinitely as a lingering distress. And the wound is not assuaged by the reflection that I

might have gone on whispering and talking persistently and insistently in season and out of season until the reputed homecoming of the proverbial kine, had not the appeal of "A Supplicant for Silence" pulled me up short and made me conscious of my lack of consideration for others, to say nothing of my irreverence and indecorum.

But nevermore. Let "Supplicant" be assured of that. My gratitude goes out to him for his insight, his magnanimous understanding of the insidious nature of this predilection for pre-service prattle. One is drawn into it unwittingly, or vice versa. Obviously one could by main force remain stolidly incommunicative when one is whispered at persistently and insistently by some garrulous tempter. To achieve this is no mean feat, however. For one thing there is the galling thought of how said tempter may be rating me and my I. Q. when I meet his persistent and insistent whispering with a vacuous scowl. Put yourself in my place, Mr. Supplicant. Take a simple illustration.

Let us suppose that my *vis-à-vis* is a fellow-usher in my own aisle, all agog with sociability, who greets me with a whispered cascade of comment and query and then quite naturally awaits my appropriate response. Imagine his consternation if I, instead of eagerly reciprocating his confidences, squelch him with a supercilious shush accompanied by the facial grimaces of the less jovial type of marine crab. The experience is anything but exhilarating for both sides. Even less so when the tables are turned. If my own persistent and insistent solicitations elicit from my auditor only a fishy disdain, my first unedited reaction is likely to be: "Are you deaf, or just dumb?"

One may safely assume, however, that "A Supplicant" has given proper weight to psychological factors such as these, which seriously complicate the delicate situation.

Be that as it may, no obstacles shall thwart my resolute determination to improve my deportment in future. My own interior urge to chatter in church shall be ruthlessly curbed. "Avaunt ye!" shall henceforth be my greeting to tempters from without. Articulate profaners of the pre-service hush may expect only a cold rebuff from me. They shall not entice me to apostasy by their seductive sibilants. The next persistent and insistent whisperer that accosts me during the period just preceding the morning service on Sunday will get a glassy-eyed reception.

As a self-confessed church-whisperer, I solemnly affirm that from now on, let him whisper in church who will; as for me, I whisper in church no more.

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An Inter-Faith Manifesto

(The Church in New York City goes on record in this manifesto, in so far as representative groups within the three faiths can carry the responsibility, as concerned and stirred to the depths over the deplorable results on character and personality that accrue to the people living in the slums. The manifesto speaks our minds as Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, and as Jews, and we feel that it will have a response in the minds of religious people everywhere.)

We, the undersigned, Priests, Ministers and Rabbis of the Churches and Synagogues of New York City, desire to set forth this manifesto to the duly constituted authorities and to the whole citizen body of America.

Millions of American families are living and have for years been forced to live in buildings and neighborhoods that are an acute menace to the welfare of body, mind and spirit. In all of our largest cities and in many of the smaller ones there exist definite slum areas which cast their blight upon the lives of men and women and little children—our neighbors and our fellow citizens.

Sociological studies offer conclusive evidence that slums breed crime. Health surveys have established the undeniable fact that slum areas are conducive to a higher infant mortality and a much greater incidence of disease. The experience of religious workers in underprivileged communities demonstrates the fact that the slum area aggravates nearly every physical and spiritual ill to which human life is susceptible. The slum denies to its dwellers the God-given rights and the human necessities of sunlight and fresh air. For the most part it denies to families the sort of home environment in which a wholesome family life can be maintained and nourished. It denies to little children room to play, save in the perilous streets amid the passing automobiles and exposed to vicious contacts. It denies to adolescent youth the place to play, room for necessary privacy and surroundings for fair and satisfactory association. It denies to hard-working men and women many of the elements which are regarded as essential to the home and to a personal and family self-respect.

We challenge all men to consider the implications of the following facts regarding existing conditions in New York City:

There are 17 square miles of slums. There are 66,000 old-law tenements housing nearly a third of the city's population, more than 500,000 families, including upwards of a million children. Between 1918 and 1929 there were 15,660 fires in old-law tenements and 448 human beings were burned to death. In the most congested area the infant mortality rate is approximately 100% higher than the city average; the general mortality is more than 200% higher, and the incidence of tuberculosis is nearly 300% higher. The Real Property inventory reveals the fact that in New York out of 2,067,065 dwelling units 322,065 lack Hot Water; 249,653 lack Private Indoor Toilets; 309,157 are without Tubs or Showers; 491,596 are without Central Heat. More than half of the 91,350 families in the lower East Side are without inside toilets. Common toilets are located in the halls or the rear yards. Central heating is lacking in 5,129 flats, 14,118 lack hot water, 40,216 are without tubs or showers. In the city at large there are some 250,000 sleeping rooms into

which the sun cannot shine—rooms for which the only access to fresh air is a narrow, interior and practically useless air shaft. In the 19th Police Precinct—probably the richest district in the world in so far as controlled wealth is concerned—there are upwards of 40,000 windowless sleeping rooms and east of Third Avenue probably less than 50% of the homes have private toilets.

More could be added but we cite these facts and call upon all who read them to evaluate them in human terms—to conceive what they mean to families and to individual lives. We submit that under such conditions the proffered "right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" becomes almost a travesty. We honor those who have grown to fine manhood and womanhood in spite of the hazards and handicaps of the slum environment. We firmly maintain that slums are not made slums by those who dwell in them.

We in New York are humbled by our recital of these conditions. We know, however, that our city is not alone in such awful offence against the sanctity of human life. We are deeply humbled by the fact that we have not before cried out in protest.

We are fully aware of the fact that the abolition of the slum is not a simple project. We are conscious of the many voices which say "It can't be done." We insist, however, in behalf of the sacredness of human life, that cost what it may—it must be done. While we realize that the more fundamental necessity is so to reorder our economic and social structure that all families may have adequate means for decent living—nevertheless, there is the immediate and imperative need for adequate housing. Every year adds to the toll of human waste and suffering.

To condone the continuance of the slum is to consent to this waste and suffering. To raise supposedly insuperable obstacles is to suggest the futility of our order of American existence. We point out the fact that since 1919 the Government of England has built nearly 1,200,000 low-rental housing units—providing new homes for more than 4,000,000 of its people.

Therefore, in the name of Church and Synagogue, we pledge ourselves to strive without ceasing to abolish the slum.

We call upon our people to rise in moral indignation against the continuance of these conditions.

We call upon all citizens to demand their abolition.

We plead with the religious leaders and the peoples of the great American nation to unite their voices to ours.

We appeal to our constituted authorities in City, State and Nation to set forward at once an expeditious program for the re-housing of these millions of underprivileged fellow citizens.

The signers are:

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THE CHURCH MONTHLY would send a word of good cheer and best wishes to all of its readers. As we take down the 1935 date from our masthead and replace it with that of 1936 we find ourselves thinking of the process as a symbol of many things which you and we have in common besides this inevitable adjustment of our calendars.

We are a people of widely different interests, living in widely separated places around the earth, we who regularly read THE CHURCH MONTHLY. A more diverse family it is difficult to imagine than are we. Only a few concerns of spiritual and intellectual content do we hold in common or would we be likely to agree upon in any great detail. But the matters on which our interests center are very vital matters to us and to all the world. We can together pray with earnestness that the end of the year may find mankind in happier estate than does the beginning; that there may be strength, wisdom, and courage sufficient unto each passing day; that in all real advance, either in thought or action, we may find ourselves to be a part, however small a part, of the gains which God may grant.

To you who worship here from week to week we who are more directly responsible for the public services, that is, frankly, the ministers, would speak a word of high appreciation of the cooperation given by the large staff of assistants, from the boiler-room to the Church office. For the most part they are not in evidence on Sunday morning but in very large measure they make possible everything that is in evidence on Sunday and every day in the week. They are a part of the blessing which we share in common.

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